

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A system for accepting and storing items for subsequent pickup by a commercial carrier, comprising:
 - an outer housing;
 - means for weighing an item which a customer may intend to ship;
 - means for inputting information relating to the destination of the item from customer;
 - control means for calculating charges comprising a shipment fee for the item, said control means being in communication with said weighing means and said information inputting means;
 - means in communication with said control means~~[[,]]~~ for accepting identification information relating to eventual payment from the customer, said ~~communication~~ means in communication with said control means comprising means for receiving and reading a credit card~~[[,]]~~ and means for communicating the charges information to a central location for billing the charges to said customer;
 - a storage area defined by said outer housing~~[[,]]~~ comprising ~~and~~ secure deposit means for permitting a customer to securely deposit the item into the storage area, said secure deposit means including a first zone which serves as a holding space ~~when said item is first placed in the storage area~~ and a secure zone into which the item is moved for secure storage.
2. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein said system includes means for supplying voice instructions for operation of said system.
3. (Canceled)

4. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 1 wherein said ~~means~~ outer housing includes means for measuring the item size and inputting such size into said control means for use in calculating the shipping charge.

5. (Currently Amended) An integrated, automated, unattended unit for collecting and securely holding items for collection and shipment by commercial delivery services, said automated unit comprising:

~~means for weighing the item to be shipped in order to obtain an item shipping weight, said weighing means secured to or contained within said unit;~~

means for inputting information relating to the destination to which the item is to be shipped;

control means for analyzing the inputted information and calculating ~~the a~~ fee for shipment of the item ~~based in part upon said inputted information and said item shipping weight, said control means being in communication with said weighing means and said information inputting means, and wherein;~~ said control means further includes including means for receiving credit card information and means for communicating and assessing the shipment fee to the account of the person owning the credit card, said means for communicating the shipment fee ~~being by~~ comprising telephone lines;

~~means contained within said unit for securely storing said item until the item is collected by said commercial delivery service; and~~

means for storing the inputted information ~~once~~ associated with said item is disposed in said secured storage means, ~~wherein said inputted information storing means is and communication with said control means and said means for inputting information.~~

6. (Currently Amended) The integrated, automated, unattended unit of claim 5 including means ~~contained within said unit~~ for printing a hard copy of said a manifest.

7. (Canceled)

8. (Original) The integrated, automated, unattended unit of claim 5 wherein said means for receiving said credit card information comprises a magnetic card reader.

9. (Canceled)

10. (Currently Amended) An integrated, automated, unattended unit for collecting and securely holding items for collection and shipment by commercial delivery services; said automated unit comprising;

means for weighing the item to be shipped ~~in order to obtain and the item shipping weight, said weighing means secured two or contained within said unit;~~

means for inputting information relating to the destination to which the item is to be shipped;

control means for analyzing the inputted information and calculating the a fee for shipment of the item ~~based in part upon said inputted information and said item shipping weight, said control means being in communication with said weighing means and said information inputting means, and wherein;~~ said control means further includes means for communicating and assessing the shipment fee to the an account of the a person, said means for communicating the shipment fee ~~being by~~ comprising telephone lines;

~~means contained within said unit~~ for securely storing said item until the item is collected by said commercial delivery service; and

means for storing the inputted information ~~once~~ associated with said item is disposed in said secure storage means, said information storage means including means for transmitting a manifest to a remote location, ~~wherein said inputted information storing means is in communication with said control means and said means for inputting information.~~

11. - 12. (Canceled)

13. (Currently Amended) A system for accepting and storing items for subsequent pickup by a commercial carrier, comprising:

means for weighing an item which a customer may intend to ship;

means for inputting information relating to the destination of the item from customer;

control means for calculating charges comprising a shipment fee for the item, said control means being in communication with said weighing means and said information inputting means;

means in communication with said control means~~[[,]]~~ for accepting identification information relating to eventual payment from the customer, ~~said communication means comprising and~~ means for communicating the charges information to a central location for billing the charges to said customer;

a storage area; ~~and~~ comprising secure deposit means for permitting a customer to securely deposit the item into the storage area, said secure deposit means including a first zone which serves as a holding space ~~when said item is first placed in the storage area~~ and a secure zone into which the item is moved for secure storage and means for conveying said item from said holding space to said storage area.

14. (Currently Amended) A system for accepting and storing items for subsequent pickup by a commercial carrier, comprising:

means for weighing an item which a customer may intend to ship, said weighing means being supported by said system;

means for inputting information relating to the destination of the item from the customer;

control means for calculating charges comprising a shipment fee for the item, said control means being in communication with said weighing means and said information inputting means;

means in communication with said control means~~[[,]]~~ for accepting identification information relating to eventual payment from the customer, ~~said communication means comprising and~~ means for communicating the charges information to a central location for billing the charges to said customer;

a storage area; and comprising secure deposit means for permitting a customer to securely deposit the item into the storage area, said secure deposit means including a first zone which serves as holding space ~~when said item is first placed in the storage area~~ and a secure zone into which the item is moved for secure storage.

15. (Canceled)

16. (Currently Amended) An integrated, automated, unattended unit for collecting and securely holding item for collection and shipment by commercial delivery services; said automated unit comprising,

~~means for weighing the item to be shipped in order to obtain an item shipping weight, said weighing means secured two or contained within said unit;~~

means for inputting information relating to the destination to which the item is to be shipped;

control means for analyzing the inputted information and calculating the fee for shipment of the item ~~based in part upon said inputted information and said item shipping weight, said control means being in communication with said weighing means and said information inputting means, and wherein, said control means further includes~~ including means for communicating and assessing the shipment fee to the an account of the a person, said means for communicating and assessing comprising means for printing a hard copy of said ~~account charge~~ shipment fee for said person;

~~means contained within said unit for securely storing said item until the item is collected by said commercial delivery service; and~~

means for storing the inputted information ~~once~~ associated with said item is disposed in said secured storage means, ~~wherein said inputted information storing means is in communication with said control means and said means for inputting information.~~

17. - 18. (Canceled)

19. (Currently Amended) An integrated, automated, unattended unit for collecting and securely holding items for collection and shipment by commercial delivery services; said automated unit comprising;

means for inputting information relating to the destination to which the item is to be shipped;

control means for analyzing the inputted information and calculating the fee for shipment of the item, said control means further including means for communicating and assessing the shipment fee to the an account of the a person, said means for communicating the shipment fee ~~being by~~ comprising telephone lines;

~~means contained within said unit~~ means for securely storing said item until the item is collected by said commercial delivery service;

means for storing the inputted information ~~once~~ associated with said item is disposed in said secured storage means, said information storage means including means for transmitting information that may be used to prepare a manifest to a remote location.

20. (New) A system for accepting and storing items for subsequent pickup by a commercial carrier, comprising:

an outer housing;

means for weighing an item which a customer may intend to ship;

a keyboard or touch screen for inputting information relating to the destination of the item from customer;

control means for calculating charges comprising a shipment fee for the item, said control means being in communication with said weighing means and said keyboard or touch screen;

means in communication with said control means for accepting identification information relating to eventual payment from the customer, said means in communication with said control means comprising means for receiving and reading a credit card, and telephone lines connected to the means for receiving and reading a credit card for communicating the charges to a central location for billing the charges to said customer;

a storage area defined by said outer housing comprising secure deposit means for permitting a customer to securely deposit the item into the storage area, said secure deposit means including a first zone which serves as a holding space and a secure zone into which the item is moved for secure storage.

21. (New) An integrated, automated, unattended unit for collecting and securely holding items for collection and shipment by commercial delivery services, said automated unit comprising:

means for weighing the item to be shipped;

a keyboard or touch screen for inputting information relating to the destination to which the item is to be shipped;

control means for analyzing the inputted information and calculating a fee for shipment of the item;

means for receiving credit card information;

means for communicating and assessing the shipment fee to the account of the person owning the credit card comprising telephone lines;

means for securely storing said item until the item is collected by said commercial delivery service; and

a memory for storing the inputted information associated with said item disposed in said secured storage means.

22. (New) An integrated, automated, unattended unit for collecting and securely holding items for collection and shipment by commercial delivery services, said automated unit comprising:

means for weighing the item to be shipped;

a keyboard or touch screen for inputting information relating to the destination to which the item is to be shipped;

control means for analyzing the inputted information and calculating a fee for shipment of the item;

means for communicating and assessing the shipment fee to an account of a person comprising telephone lines;

means for securely storing said item until the item is collected by said commercial delivery service; and

a memory for storing the inputted information associated with said item disposed in said secure storage means, said information storage means including means for transmitting a manifest to a remote location.

23. (New) A system for accepting and storing items for subsequent pickup by a commercial carrier, comprising:

means for weighing an item which a customer may intend to ship;

a keyboard or touch screen for inputting information relating to the destination of the item from customer;

control means for calculating charges comprising a shipment fee for the item, said control means being in communication with said weighing means and said keyboard or touch screen;

means in communication with said control means for accepting identification information relating to eventual payment from the customer and for communicating the charges to a central location for billing the charges to said customer; and

a storage area comprising secure deposit means for permitting a customer to securely deposit the item into the storage area, said secure deposit means including a first zone which serves as a holding space and a secure zone into which the item is moved for secure storage and means for conveying said item from said holding space to said storage area.

24. (New) A system for accepting and storing items for subsequent pickup by a commercial carrier, comprising:

means for weighing an item which a customer may intend to ship;

a keyboard or touch screen for inputting information relating to the destination of the item from the customer;

control means for calculating charges comprising a shipment fee for the item, said control means being in communication with said weighing means and said keyboard or touch screen;

means in communication with said control means for accepting identification information relating to eventual payment from the customer, and for communicating the charges to a central location for billing the charges to said customer; and

a storage area comprising secure deposit means for permitting a customer to securely deposit the item into the storage area, said secure deposit means including a first zone which serves as holding space and a secure zone into which the item is moved for secure storage.

25. (New) An integrated, automated, unattended unit for collecting and securely holding item for collection and shipment by commercial delivery services; said automated unit comprising,

means for weighing the item to be shipped;

a keyboard or touch screen for inputting information relating to the destination to which the item is to be shipped;

means for analyzing the inputted information and calculating a fee for shipment of the item;

means for communicating and assessing the shipment fee to an account of a person comprising means for printing a hard copy of said shipment fee for said person;

means for securely storing said item until the item is collected by said commercial delivery service; and

a memory for storing the inputted information associated with said item disposed in said secured storage means.

26. (New) An integrated, automated, unattended unit for collecting and securely holding item for collection and shipment by commercial delivery services; said automated unit comprising,

a keyboard or touch screen for inputting information relating to the destination to which the item is to be shipped;

control means for analyzing the inputted information and calculating a fee for shipment of the item;

means for communicating and assessing the shipment fee to an account of a person comprising means for printing a hard copy of said shipment fee for said person;

means for securely storing said item until the item is collected by said commercial delivery service;

a memory for storing the inputted information associated with said item disposed in said secured storage means; and

means for transmitting the inputted information to a remote location.